

# **RCTB** RICHLAND COUNTY TRANSIT BOARD

19 N. Main St. Mansfield, Ohio 44902 419-774-5684 fax 419-774-5685

MINUTES of the December 13, 2023 RCT Board meeting

## PRESENT:

Board: Scott Heimann, Ed Pickens, Clint Knight, Trae Turner

Absent: Carl Neutzling, Crystal Davis-Weese, Donna Hight

Regional Planning: Jean Taddie, Carol Coover

Transdev/First Transit: Chris Terry, Tara Burchett; Via Zoom: Cristin Tolen

Guest: Todd Blankenship

## **Call to Order**

Chairman Clint Knight called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

## **Recommended Actions: Routine Matters – CONSENT AGENDA**

The November RCTB meeting minutes, bills to pay, TMR and RCTB financial reports, GM report, status of grant programs, ridership and advertising reports were provided in advance for review.

Jean thanked Clint for his three great years of service to the board, welcomed Trae to the board, and noted that Todd will be joining the board officially at the beginning of the year.

Jean noted that in the bills to pay there is a \$42,000 advance to pay Transit Management of Richland (TMR). This is for an advance to cover payroll while the County banking is closed for year end.

***Scott Heimann made a motion to approve the consent agendas. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.***

## **Old Business**

A procurement update was provided in advance for review. The CAD/AVL contract went to legal. They had some questions, and we responded. It's back at legal, so we are waiting on their approval. Regional Planning's new GIS person is working on turning our maps into GTFS data that can be digested into AVL.

On the Operations Management contract, First Transit did their legal review and it has been sent over to our attorneys. There were a few minor changes in language requested by First Transit. Legal has not returned the contract approval yet. This is a little concerning since there are only 18 days remaining on our current contract. Jean has followed up with legal for status updates last week.

The HVAC contract did pass legal review and has been signed by Cavalry Mechanical. We have a meeting with the contractor, engineer and Chris and Tara on December 19. After that, Cavalry can start ordering the equipment. Some equipment will have a long lead time. The industrial equipment could take up to a year. The air conditioning should be timely and available by summer. We will be in charge of doing the Davis-Bacon monitoring.

The windows will need to be re-bid, as they have to have prevailing wage and buy America. The previous bids that came in have timed out.

On the new buses, the third bus was supposed to be here by the end of the year. Now they are saying by early next year. It's at the dealership and built, but it has to go through a quality check.

Transit Development Plan (TDP):

- Mission/Vision - we had a great planning session on 12/5. Consultant Christy Campoll spoke with Donna Hight about the meeting since she was not able to attend. Donna found the word mobility confusing. There was a discussion about wording in the mission statement. Jean asked if we want to change the wording to say “transportation” instead of “mobility”. Clint noted mobility leaves it very broad but what we do is provide transportation. Transportation encompasses multi-modal options, including buses, vehicles, bikes, scooters, etc. Ed suggested “freedom of mobility through transportation”. Transit is not limited to people, could be goods, group mode. It was agreed that transportation is a better substitute for mobility. We'll provide our discussion to Christy and think about it more.
- Draft TDP – The TDP is a condensed version of all the tech memos. Jean has received the first draft of the TDP and will review and send revisions to Christy. After Christy revises and resubmits it, Jean will review the changes and suggest any further updates. RLS will send us the draft final PDF for board review and approval.
- Proposal for Transit Center (TC) rental – This proposal is in the TDP recommendations. Jean asked if we want to consider renting out the transit center's unused offices for a revenue source. In the past a person sold bus passes from the TC and Mansfield Community Police had an office, but neither of these spaces is being utilized. In the back area of the building which is usually locked, there are two offices (one is small like a storage area), a driver break room and private restrooms. The front section of the building has a public waiting room, restrooms and vending area. Ed asked how many square feet. Chris said that they will need to measure the square footage. Would we be interested in investigating what it would take to do this in the coming year or two? We could possible rent it to a social service agency or other community partner. Do we see any issues or red flags? Scott suggested starting with a commercial realtor. Tara mentioned the building needs updates and remodeling. Jean noted that remodeling would need to be addressed with the potential partner. Hearing no objections, we will include this possibility for future planning and consideration.
- Fare payment system - Jean noted that an opportunity for EZFare has opened up in the last few days. NEORide formed this fare payment system. We are member of NEORide, and they are offering RCTB the opportunity to join their ODOT grant, which would award \$11,500 to pay for installation/implementation that is available because one of the four original transit partners, HAPCAP, couldn't get approval from their sponsor. Passengers would have a card that they load with money to use for their bus rides. This is not the only fare payment system, another one is Transit Token. NEORide will need to know by January if we are interested in this. The cost after implementation would be \$2,000/year prorated for the 1<sup>st</sup> year plus

\$750/year to NEORide for admin. There would also be a 7.6% fee per transaction. Scott asked if any organizations have data showing increases in revenue or ridership. He would also like to know why HAPCAP was not interested in it. Jean will check with her GoBus contact at HAPCAP to see the reasoning behind their decision. Scott noted that if we are breaking even, if it's convenient to our customers it is worth it. Is there a positive/neutral cash financial implication in doing it? Jean mentioned that we could still accept cash from customers too. It would be helpful for us if Agencies could pay through this. Scott feels like it increases accessibility. Jean will check back with NEORide to ask more questions and get more information. We will also find out what Transit Token costs as a comparison.

- Service change pilot updates - overall ridership is down compared to same months last year. Some routes (Park Ave & 4<sup>th</sup> Street) are less now because people have moved to the Ontario circulator. Wayne Street ridership is up a little bit. Glessner Ave. route is down some. The airport route and circulator were both up last month. Chris noted that historically when route changes are made it takes around four months for passengers to get used to the changes. We set 6 months as the pilot phase, but we can increase it to 8 or more months if we want to.

The Fare-Free Saturday service update showed there was better ridership on Dec. 9 (212) vs Dec. 2 (168), for roughly ½ days of service. Chris feels like Dec. 16 will be really busy since it's the last one. The numbers from last year are on track for this year.

On the 2024 budget, the finance committee met 12/11 to review and discuss the budget numbers. The operating budget shows us using \$1.97 million of our Federal grants. This is more than our recent annual apportionment of approx. \$1.4 million of FTA 5307 funds. The budget also includes a local match shortfall of \$224,000, which would need to come out of RCTB's transit reserve that currently has just over \$1 million. On the federal side, we have part of FFY 2022 and all of 2023 FTA 5307 funds available, and 2024 funding is yet to be announced. Our ODOT representative is coming on 12/19 so we will discuss possibilities with him. Possibly we can get more than \$1.4 million of 5307 funds through the governor's apportionment grant process. State Urban Transit Program (UTP) funding was bumped to a higher level for SFY2024, and is expected to continue at a higher level through SFY2025 at least. We were awarded additional state operating funds of \$100,000 for SFY2024 through the Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTPP). We applied again for SFY25 OTPP funds and could reduce the local funds carryover need of \$224,000 by whatever the state may award us for these competitive grants. In addition to requesting matching funds, we applied for roughly \$3 million for buses and a roof project at the bus admin office. We are trying to get 100% federal match for those capital projects. These competitive grant awards should be announced by Jan. or Feb. 2024.

The \$1,551,000 capital budget covers projects that we know for sure are funded and in the works. If we are awarded more buses or the roof repairs, those projects will be added in later. Up to \$60,000 of local match funds are budgeted for capital. Hopefully the county will be able to provide some help with this, and Jean will meet with the commissioners about it.

***Ed Pickens made a motion to approve the 2024 operations and capital budgets. Scott Heimann seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried.***

**New Business**

Jean noted that the 2024 RCTB meeting calendar will be the same format as 2023. The January meeting was bumped to the 17<sup>th</sup> with the holidays and the county bank being closed. For the October 2024 meeting, the board decided not to hold the meeting on Columbus Day, because there would be a better chance of having quorum on Tuesday, Oct. 15. Ed asked about giving TMR a permanent advance to cover payroll each month so there's no risk of missing payroll while waiting for the board to approve the bills. It would be something we would need to look at. We would need to change our financial policies too.

***Trae Turner made a motion to approve the 2024 meeting calendar. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried.***

The Shelby Taxi 2024 contract was provided in advance for review. This is a one year subrecipient contract that passes through up to \$25,000 of RCTB's FTA 5307 funds to support Shelby Taxi service. Shelby uses contract drivers through a temp agency and a city vehicle, offering door to door service 4 days per week. They have a separate contract with ATAC to provide paratransit service. There were no questions about the contract.

***Ed Pickens made a motion to approve the 2024 Shelby Taxi contract, contingent upon legal review. Trae Turner seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried.***

The board discussed marketing RCT's new routes. Jean noted that ODOT has competitive contracts to help the transit industry grow back towards pre-pandemic levels. It's not free, but we can use the state contracts knowing they are competitively bid, with procurement documents. One of the agencies, Rasor, has contacted us and will provide a quote for the new routes, especially the Ontario circulator. We have a small budget (less than \$5,000) in the professional services line. Clint noted that it pays to contract with professionals to do it correctly and get results. He will forward his local contact recommendations to Jean. This will be discussed more at the next meeting.

**Executive Session**

There was no executive session.

**Other Business from the Floor**

There was no other business.

**Adjourn**

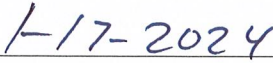
***There being no further business, Scott Heimann made a motion to adjourn. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.***

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

**Next Meeting**

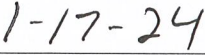
The next RCTB meeting is the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, January 17 at 8:30 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Heimann, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The undersigned duly qualified and acting chairman of the Richland County Transit Board certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes, approved at a legally convened meeting of the Board, of the RCTB meeting held on December 13, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clint Knight, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date